

Long-serving board members honored

□ January is School Board Recognition Month nationwide

By Danielle Frost

Post-Record staff

Thomas Huffman and Orlan Gessford have been serving on the Washougal School Board for a combined total of 43 years.

Gessford has served on the board for 25 years, and Huffman for 18.

Washougal School District superintendent Teresa Baldwin made special mention of the two during a meeting last week.

January is National School Board Recognition Month, where board members are typically given plaques or certificates for their work.

Board members in Camas and Washougal are unpaid.

"I am fortunate to work with them," Baldwin said. "Mr. Huffman came in 1991 and he knows everything about Washougal. He's an advocate for career and technical education. If you have a question, you can call him and he'll quietly listen and be non-judgmental."

Baldwin said that the 25 years Gessford has served are a, "monument to School Board contribution."

"He is truly a voice for the struggling student," she said. "He has a deep level of compassion and understanding, and people know that."

Gessford has worked under five superintendents and participated in countless meetings.

"What he brings to the board is a deep level of



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Orlan Gessford (left) and Thomas Huffman are the longest-serving members of the Washougal School Board. They were honored at a board meeting last week.

understanding of finance and educational budgeting," she said. "He has kept a steady eye on our resources."

The other members of the Washougal School Board are Blaine Peterson, Elaine Pfeifer and Ron Dinius. Each was given a certificate and plaque, as well as a thank-you card from students at Washougal High School.

Camas School Board members were also honored at their meeting last week with bamboo plants, certificates and Nestle 100 GRAND candy bars.

The board is comprised of Doug Quinn, Casey O'Dell, Julie Rotz, Connie Hennessey and Marty Tipton.

"I know you are unpaid, but you are worth so much more," Superintendent Mike Nerland said as he passed out the candy.

Casey O'Dell is the longest serving board member in Camas, having been on the board for eight years. Until recently, Mel Cardon was the longest serving member, having been on the board for 34 years until his retirement in December.